

ment to keep busy and his as he invented reasons to see a senator or Hoover. s wide-ranging, with cli- worlds of literature, jour- and politics. Assistants is direction; he polished product. The best ideas had "one hundred solu- five problems," said a him in a New York Bar d he never was bashful his manner Ernst wrote books, nearly half with out censorship and pri- America, and sexual be- s considered the First society, and large-scale it in addition to several memoirs. All were hast- istic interpretation that g.

itty, informal, and nat- et a difference of opin- "I only learn from disagree," he said. His ezy manner resembled Ernst lived in a world ers know it. "He must e people, but if so he noted Roger Baldwin, ACLU. Ernst's clients ped. His shrewd sense as instrumental in his important civil liberties the twentieth century. yer of his time, Ernst rtistic, and reproduc- New York City.

"Morris Ernst and Disclosure," *Mid-America*, Jan. 1939; Samuel Walker, *In Defense of American Lib- erties: A History of the ACLU* (1990); and Edward DeGrazia, *Girls Lean Back Everywhere* (1992). An obituary is in the *New York Times*, May 23, 1976.]
ROGER K. NEWMAN

ETTING, RUTH (Nov. 23, 1896–Sept. 24, 1978), singer, was born in David City, Nebr., the daughter of Winifred and Alfred Etting; her father was a bank teller. Ruth's mother became ill and Ruth went to live with her paternal grandparents at age five. Her grandfather, George Etting, owned Etting Roller Mills and built the David City Opera House. Her father remarried after the death of his first wife, but Ruth remained with her grandparents.

As a young child, Etting showed no great interest in music and did not participate in any school musical activities. Growing up in David City, her only singing was as a member of the local Congregational church choir. She was not very interested in academics but enjoyed drawing and design. Etting completed high school at seventeen and soon after left for Chicago to attend the Academy of Fine Arts to study costume design. While attending school, she sketched costume designs for the wife of the manager of the Marigold Gardens nightclub. The manager and his wife liked Etting's work and invited her to the club to watch a show. Etting was enamored by the chorus, and soon after the manager offered her a job as a chorus member. For a time she attended school while working at the Marigold Gardens and another nightspot. But she was unable to keep up this pace and decided to quit school.

In 1919 a flu epidemic caused the Chicago government to close all nightclubs. Etting sup-

ported herself by painting Christmas cards. When the Marigold Gardens reopened, she rejoined the chorus. One evening the male singing star became ill. Etting knew his solo (she had been overheard quietly singing it along with the lead singer), and the manager asked her to dress in men's clothes and sing the solo, "Hats Off to the Polo Girl." Her performance went so well that Etting was asked to continue singing the solo for the duration of the show. Her voice was clear and sincere, and audiences loved her singing as well as her appearance.

Etting was young and inexperienced at negotiating business deals. She had no family in Chicago and was reluctant to tell her grandparents that she had quit design school and needed guidance. While singing at Marigold Gardens, she met the boisterous and outspoken Martin Moses ("Moe") Snyder, nicknamed "the Gimp." Before long, Snyder was her manager, and on July 12, 1922, they married. When elaborate floor shows began to disappear under Prohibition, Etting took a job at an Italian nightclub singing for tips. Later she moved to Chicago's College Inn at the Sherman Hotel. There she appeared with Abe Lyman and his orchestra on WLS radio programs. Columbia signed a recording contract with Etting around 1926. Her first recordings were "Let's Talk About My Sweetie" and "Nothing Else to Do." In 1927 she became a member of Florenz Ziegfeld's *Follies* in New York City. The 1930 *Follies* featured Ruth Etting singing "Ten Cents a Dance," a song that became associated with her throughout her singing career.

With the death of Ziegfeld in 1932 came a change in American entertainment. Etting left the *Follies* and appeared regularly on popular radio programs, such as "Chesterfield's Music That Satisfies." In 1933 she appeared in the movie *Roman Scandals* with Eddie Cantor. However, Etting's acting talents were never fully developed; most of her movie appearances featured her singing only.

As her manager, Moe Snyder oftentimes bullied agents, producers, and fans alike. He was temperamental and often alienated the very agents and producers he wished to impress. Although Etting was unhappy in her marriage, for many years she was too afraid of Snyder to leave him. In 1937, Etting made four recordings for Decca. After these recordings, she made no attempt to work. Sometime in August of that year, in front of guests, Snyder lost his temper and

lashed Etting across the legs with his cane. Soon after, Etting sought a divorce, which was granted on Nov. 30, 1937.

Etting had worked for a brief time in 1935 with pianist and arranger Myrl Alderman. After her divorce she began seeing Alderman and they soon fell in love. When Snyder heard of this budding romance, he began harassing Etting by phone. In 1938, after she moved in with Alderman, Snyder came to their home and shot Alderman. Snyder was arrested and eventually served one year in prison for attempted murder. Alderman recovered, and he and Etting were married in December 1938 and soon settled in Colorado Springs, Colo. After World War II, the couple moved to Hollywood. In 1954, Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer obtained the rights to make a movie version of Ruth Etting's life. Doris Day played the role of Ruth Etting in the film, *Love Me or Leave Me*.

Although Ruth Etting had enjoyed a successful singing career and much popularity, her marriage to Snyder dampened her ambitions. In a later interview she said that she really did not enjoy her musical career because she associated it with her relationship with Snyder. She seemed quite content married to Alderman and not particularly bothered by her growing anonymity. She came out of retirement in 1946 to appear regularly on the "Rudy Vallee Hour." She also starred with Alderman on a radio show on WHN, a New York station.

Etting sang with a sincerity that touched American audiences, popularizing such songs as "It All Depends on You," "You Made Me Love You," "Ten Cents a Dance," "Mean to Me," and others that she recorded on the Columbia, Brunswick, and Decca labels. Etting's later recordings have a much richer and mature vocal sound and a more developed sense of rhythmic phrasing. She made recordings with early jazz musicians Rube Bloom, Joe Venuti, Eddie Lang, and the Dorsey brothers. She sang with Bing Crosby, Eddie Cantor, and other popular artists of the time. Etting continued to live in Colorado Springs until her death.

[Obituaries are in *Variety*, Sept. 27, 1978, and the *New York Times*, Nov. 6, 1978.]

JAN SHAPIRO

EVANS, BERGEN BALDWIN (Sept. 19, 1904–Feb. 4, 1978), college professor, author, and television host, was born in Franklin, Ohio,